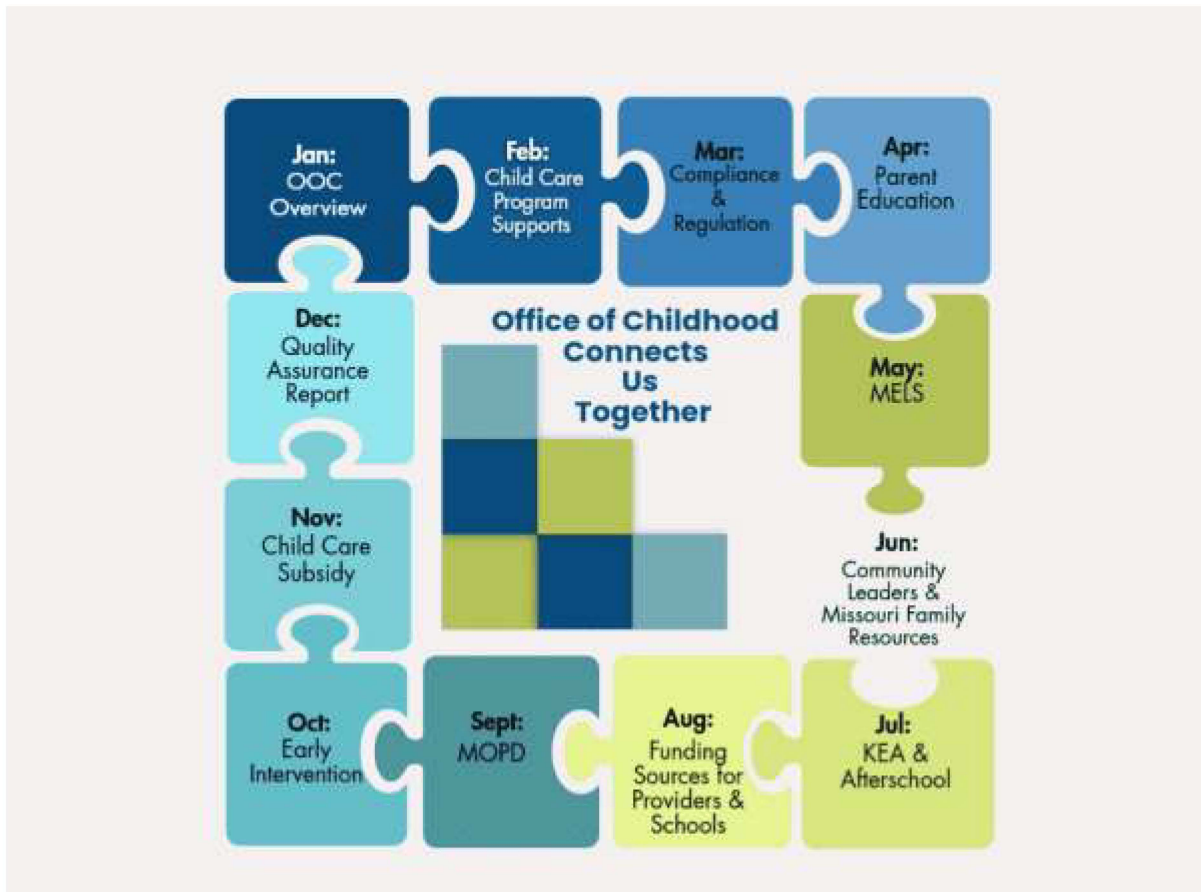




Childhood Connections

June 22, 2026

Office of Childhood Connects Us Together



In 2026, we are taking a closer look at the Office of Childhood (OOC) by exploring different programs that work together to strengthen children and families, and the professionals that support them. In this year's newsletter series, we will spend each month highlighting different OOC programs. OOC is composed of many unique and connected parts, and each plays an important role. Together, all these programs are part of a larger system that supports families statewide. Our intent is to show how OOC programs fit together to create a better understanding of the work.

As part of our yearlong journey through the Office of Childhood (OOC), this month we are highlighting Community Leaders and Missouri Family Resources.



Community Leaders are “Champions of the Office of Childhood” ensuring Missouri’s childhood vision is heard through the state. Childhood community leaders are local leaders in every part of the state that develop and implement strong community plans aimed at ensuring all families with young children can access high-quality programs, services, and resources in their communities.

Missouri Family Resources is a statewide resource website and mobile app for professionals and families to access and share local early childhood resources.

Read about Community Leaders, their work, and more about Missouri Family Resources in the [full article on the Office of Childhood Newsfeed](#).

NEWS

Update: Office of Childhood New Email Address



The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)– Office of Childhood's (OOC) newsletters and email communications – including Childhood Connections, Subsidy Updates, This Week at OOC, and any stand-alone emails, – will be sent through a new service starting **July 1, 2026**. Our communications will be sent via GovDelivery from MODESE@public.govdelivery.com.

Please contact Childhood@dese.mo.gov if you have any questions.

Child Care Subsidy Rule Update



DESE-OOC has filed an emergency and proposed rule amendment to 5 CSR 25-200.060 Eligibility and Authorization for Child Care Subsidy.

The proposed changes include updates to eligibility policies, waitlist exceptions for adoption subsidy and protective services children, and new provisions related to excessive absences.

The proposed rule is now published in the *Missouri Register*, and the public comment period runs from **June 15 to July 15, 2026**. Stakeholders can submit

comments through the online survey, by email, or by mail.

For full details on the key changes, related resources, and instructions for submitting public comments, please visit the [child care subsidy program information webpage](#).

Dolly Parton Imagination Library Update



DESE–OOC launched [Dolly Parton's Imagination Library](#) statewide on November 8, 2023. Due to a reduction in the Fiscal Year 2027 state budget, beginning **July 1, 2026**, the Dolly Parton Imagination Library will not have the funds to accept new applications to the program. DESE–OOC will continue providing books to families already enrolled, as funding allows.

Call for Presentation Proposals: Conference on the Young Years 2027



The OOC is now accepting presentation proposals for the 54th Conference on the Young Years (CYY), taking place March 4–6, 2027, at the Tan-Tar-A Conference Center in Osage Beach, Missouri.

We invite early childhood educators, administrators, higher education partners, and community professionals to share innovative practices, research-based strategies, and Missouri success stories that support the early learning workforce. CYY 2027 is seeking dynamic, practical, and engaging sessions on a wide range of topics, including child development, curriculum and instruction, inclusion, family engagement, leadership, coaching, and other strategies that strengthen programs across the state.

Whether you bring new ideas, proven approaches, or inspiring success stories, we encourage you to submit a proposal.

Proposal deadline: July 1, 2026.

Submit your session idea and learn more at the [Conference on the Young Years webpage](#). Please feel free to share this opportunity with colleagues who may be interested in presenting.

Missouri Professional Development System Administrators Access

The Missouri Professional Development (MOPD) system now allows administrators to upload



documents to their staff's MOPD accounts. Each employee must log in with their own account and agree to the updated MOPD terms and conditions on or after May 5, 2026, to enable this new feature.

Administrators can upload:

Education Records:

- CPR/First Aid certification (only for certification, not clock hours)
- Official credentials (e.g. CDA certificate, YDC certificate)

Training Records:

- [Individual Training Requests](#)
- Unofficial college transcripts for clock hour consideration

For instructions to use this feature, view the [MOPD instructional video](#) or [MOPD written instructions on the topic 'Upload Employee Documents'](#).

For questions contact MOPD@dese.mo.gov.

Important Subsidy Payment Update



The State of Missouri MOVERS accounting system implementation has been delayed for another fiscal year. As a result of the delay, DESE must continue child care payments through the current SAMII system.

SAMII is scheduled to shut down as it did last year for the state fiscal year rollover process. The shut down is scheduled from **June 26 through July 13, 2026**. The last day for DESE to process claims is June 24, 2026, for which child care subsidy payments should be deposited within 7-10 business days.

During the shut-down period from **June 26 through July 13, 2026, DESE is unable to process claims or dispense child care subsidy payments**. Please plan accordingly for the delay in child care subsidy payments during this timeframe.

Child care providers should continue to submit invoices as usual in the Child Care Data System (CCDS). During the temporary shutdown period, the invoice status will indicate "Invoiced". Once SAMII is open, DESE will pay all pending invoices loaded in CCDS, which will be deposited within 7-10 business days. Once the claim is processed by DESE, the

status in CCDS will change from “Invoiced” to “Process Payroll.”

We apologize for any inconvenience this temporary statewide accounting system shutdown may cause.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Childhood finance team at 573-751-5298 or at 573-522-5595.

Comprehensive Background Check Process Changing July 2026



Effective July 1, 2026, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Office of Childhood (OOC) will no longer cover the cost of fingerprinting as part of the Comprehensive Background Check Process. This change is necessary due to budget considerations and an increase in unauthorized submissions.

To support you through this change, OOC has created a new [Comprehensive Background Check Process flyer](#), a quick, easy to use resource that outlines the steps at a glance.

It is important to remember that the [Comprehensive Background Check Notification form](#) must be submitted and the fingerprint authorization email must be received **before** the fingerprint process can be completed.

As a reminder, the redetermination process for individuals with expiring determination letters can begin 60 days prior to the expiration date.

Determination letters expire five years from the date of the letter.

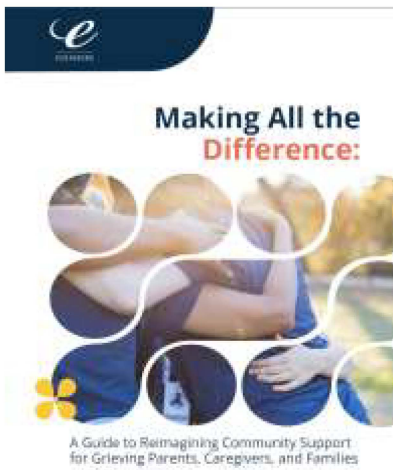
If you have any questions regarding the process, please email the OOC Background Screening Unit at ocbackgroundchecks@dese.mo.gov.

RESOURCES

Resource: Evermore Community Bereavement Response Guide

Did you Know?

- Surviving siblings face a 71% higher all-cause mortality risk later in life.
- Nearly 90% of youth in the juvenile justice system have experienced the death of a close loved one.



This [Community Bereavement Response Guide](#) provides practical recommendations for how communities and professionals can better support families following the death of a child. One of its strengths is that it includes tailored resources for a variety of frontline professionals and community partners, recognizing that bereaved families interact with many systems after a child's death.

Parents as Teachers Curriculum – Born to Learn®



Exciting News from the Parents as Teachers National Center.

Starting July 1, 2026, the brand-new Parents as Teachers (PAT) Content Platform will be available and, within it, the next evolution of the Parent as Teachers Born to Learn® Curriculum! The [Parents as Teachers National Center](#) (PATNC) has reimagined their digital curriculum experience once again, bringing a new and improved way to navigate all the content. This includes content in Foundational and Foundational 2 curricula as one in the Born to Learn® Curriculum.

This exciting new content platform is designed to support PAT educators and program supervisors plan services for families from prenatal to kindergarten entry. The Content Platform includes parent educator and family resources on child development, parenting behaviors, parent-child interaction, development-centered parenting, and family well-being.

[The image of the Born to Learn® Curriculum Areas](#) includes three key focus areas that work together, all grounded in research on child development and parenting behaviors.

Missouri Supporting Early Childhood Administrators Learning Academies Opportunity



Calling all early childhood administrators! The Missouri Supporting Early Childhood Administrators (MO-SECA) is hosting a series of learning academies in leadership and business management topics.

In July:

- **July 24-25, 2026**, in Branson, MO, at Chateau on the Lake.

In August:

- **August 7-8, 2026**, at the Drury Plaza in Cape Girardeau, MO.

For more information about the learning academies or to register visit the [MO-SECA Learning Academy webpage](#).

“Fun In The Sun” July 2026 Webinar Series



Missouri Parents Act (MPACT) empowers families to advocate for themselves so that children with special education needs can reach their full potential in education and life, through support, training, and education.

MPACT's “Fun In The Sun” July 2026 Webinar Series helps families in the Missouri First Steps program understand their parental rights, communicate their child's needs, learn about transition, and much more.

Visit the [MPACT webpage](#) to register for these virtual trainings.

What If Every Day Routines Were STEM Moments? A New Podcast Series



Want to learn simple ways to embed STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) learning into everyday routines and activities?

The [STEMIE Family Hotline podcast series](#) is designed for busy families and can be listened to on the go. Each short episode offers practical ideas to help turn everyday moments into meaningful STEM learning opportunities.

ECHO Autism Virtual Learning



Join ECHO Autism: Early Intervention, a free virtual learning series designed for school- and community-based early intervention professionals who support young children on the autism spectrum.

Sessions will be held on the 2nd and 4th Mondays from September 28, 2026, through May 10, 2027, from 2:45–4:15 p.m. CT. Participants will learn and share evidence-based strategies through interactive case-based discussions with an interdisciplinary expert team. No-cost continuing education credit is included.

[Learn more about ECHO Autism: Early Intervention and Register for ECHO Autism: Early Intervention here.](#)

Questions may be directed to echoautism@missouri.edu.

Missouri Family Resources



Find early childhood programs and community resources near you! You can search by zip code, keywords, or category. Filter and share your results with friends and family by email, text, or on social media.

Visit [Missouri Family Resources](#) and download the free mobile app for iOS or Android.

Highlights

QAR Program Highlights



Congratulations to the programs that achieved a quality designation through the Quality Assurance Report (QAR). [Read this article for the list of programs.](#)

Job Vacancies



The OOC is hiring and we would love to have you join our team! Click [this link](#) to see open positions.

Miss Something?

Visit the OOC webpage to find previous editions of Childhood Connections.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, veteran status, mental or physical disability, or any other basis prohibited by statute in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to department programs and to the location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Director of Civil Rights Compliance and MOA Coordinator (Title VI/Title VII/Title IX/504/ADA/ADAAA/Age Act/GINA/USDA Title VI), 7th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-522-1775 or TTY 800-735-2966; fax number 573-522-4883; email civilrights@dese.mo.gov.

DESE Office of Childhood | 205 Jefferson Street - 1st Floor | Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

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